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DEFENSE REPORT

Reagan's Effort to Reshape May Revive Debate over Ag

The President is about to sign an executive order on the CI delicate question of how to balance national security w

BY DOM BONAFEDE

The Reagan Administration, intent on revitalizing the U.S. intelligence apparatus, is seeking to assure that the changes conform to President Reagan's goals—to combat international terrorism and other perils to national security.

After several false starts, Reagan will shortly disclose the revisions in a new executive order—the third presidential directive governing intelligence activities in the past five years. In addition, William J. Casey, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has taken administrative and organizational measures to further centralize operations under his aegis.

On another front, the Administration is pushing legislation to exempt the CIA from Freedom of Information Act strictures and is supporting a bill that would prohibit unauthorized disclosure of information identifying U.S. intelligence operatives.

Each of these steps is part of a concerted effort to strengthen the nation's intelligence machinery in keeping with Reagan's hardline defense posture and his political ideology.

Reagan's new executive order, covering the CIA and a galaxy of sister intelligence agencies, could nonetheless provoke an intense national debate over the delicate balance between individual rights and national security. Two earlier draft proposals, leaked to the press by antagonists, were purportedly designed to expand the CIA's jurisdiction to include domestic counterintelligence, lawfully the province of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

That raised the specter of surreptitious entries, mail openings, electronic surveillance and infiltration of political groups and even legitimate business organizations. I[illegible] CIA" will be like the old CIA, which in a torrent of headlines in the 1970s was exposed for illegally spying on American citizens, exhibiting a cavalier disregard for civil liberties, participating or conspiring in overseas assassination attempts and masterminding a host of bizarre, costly and embarrassing James Bond-like plots.

Adm. Bobby R. Inman, the deputy CIA director, publicly declared in March that while the reins on the agency may be eased, the scope of the proposed changes has been distorted and exaggerated. Yet, should Reagan persist in "unleashing" the CIA, the consequences almost certainly would be to revive the highly charged dispute over the proper role of the intelligence community in a free society.

The President has already been put on notice by the intelligence oversight committees in the House and Senate that the overwhelming majority of their members are opposed to any proposals that would allow the CIA to conduct covert domestic operations.

On Oct. 30, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, headed by Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., sent its recommendations on the proposed executive order to Richard V. Allen, assistant to the President for national security affairs. Allen and an assistant, Donald Gregg, director of the National Security Council's intelligence cluster, are handling the issue for the White House. Although the committee's report is confidential, it is known that the members, in a bipartisan agreement, dissented from proposals that would permit the CIA to engage in domestic operations and offered several modifications. An addendum attached to the report included the views, mainly in opposition to particular provisions of the executive order, of 8 of the 15 committee members.

On the same day, Edward P. Boland,

[illegible] mittee on Constitutional Rights. Rodino and Don Edwards, D-Calif., the subcommittee chairman, contend that the executive order falls within their purview because it would diminish the authority of the Attorney General and the FBI in domestic intelligence matters. Both the Justice Department and the FBI come under the committee's jurisdiction.

"Most people don't know how far the order goes," Edwards said. "We're trying to let the American people and the media

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